



Joelle Richardson
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INTRODUCTION

"Let us go then, you and I," into a world of spring on a winding road of prose and verse. Away from street-sliding yellow smoke to tree-climbing yellow blossoms.

"I grow old . . . I grow old . . . I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled." But first let me live to love all of spring, but first let me live to be loved by my love.

"So how should I presume?" Let timeless ivy leaves bind up my crumbling hulk.

—M. C.

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Miss Mildred King Bearden

Haiku

Awake, sleeping bud,
Unfurl your velvet petals.
Spring beckons to you.

The goddess Luna
Pursued by the rising sun
Seeks her Neptune lover.

Dianne Boiter

"Thoughts"

Have you ever stopped to wonder,
From what your dreams are made?
Do you ever really ponder
O'er the webs of thought you weave?

They range from thoughts of joy and peace,
To those of hate and death;
To the goal that one shall never reach
And the place of constant rest.

Some are calm and quiet;
Others rage with fury strong,
Like a Harlem city riot—
Or a ringing China gong.

Mike Pitts

"He Didn't Lose You"

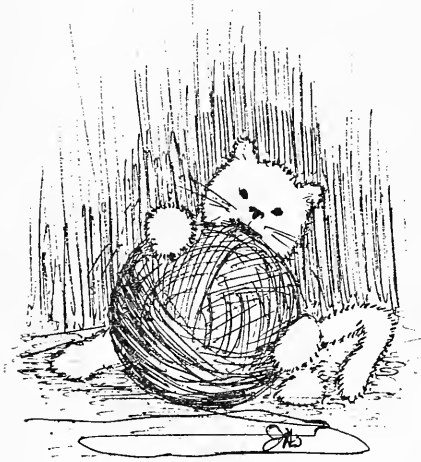
A man once told me,
" 'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all"—
But, Love, did that man ever lose you?

Mike Watson

Ode To Spring

Spring is the time
When songs are in the air,
Birds are singing,
And love is everywhere.
It's a time for walking
And seeing everything,
Oh, what a beautiful
Time of year is Spring!

Kathie Hargrove



Joy

Joy is a furry kitten
In the winter's snow;
Joy is a letter written
From someone special that you know.
Joy is the fresh spring rain
Falling on the dawn;
Joy is a choo-choo train,
And a dear one's loving yawn.
But most of all I'll tell you
The joy that wins the prize—
It's the day so bright and blue
When your childhood finally dies,
And you take those lovely vows
To be "we" instead of "me."

Linda Hawkins

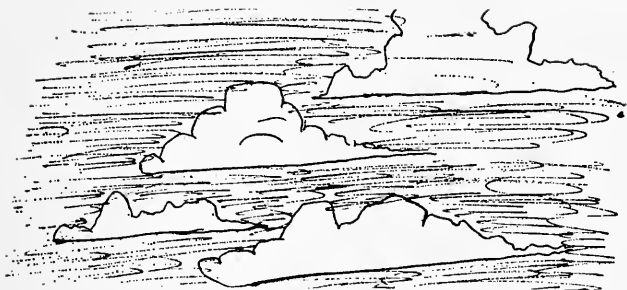
The Music That Came From The Heart

The day was cold and gray with rain as we trudged into the chapel building and took our respective seats. I sank into my chair and prepared to be bored while listening to some dull speaker. I turned to the stage and instead of the faces of the choir staring back at me there was a deserted stage. It was not actually deserted, for in the center was a piano—just an ordinary black piano which stood out starkly from the shabby gold curtains surrounding the stage. Then out on the stage walked a man. He was tall, or seemed tall, for I was looking up at him. His hair was gray and he looked a little thin. He also looked as if he were shy, or maybe nervous. He took his seat on the piano stool and flipped his coat back out of his way. He paused for a moment with his head bowed. His long sensitive fingers poised over the keys for an instant as if they were waiting for the keys to speak to them.

Then he began to play. It was as if he had left the bench and entered the music that he was bringing from the piano. His fingers danced over the keyboard, but he played with his heart. For him there was no audience. He was alone with the music. When the movement reached a crescendo, his back stiffened, and his head jerked back and forth with his fingers. When the music grew softer, his head bent toward the keys as if he would coax the music back. His fingers leaped nimbly and surely from one end of the scale to the other. He sat for an instant as if waiting for his heart to leave the music, as it died away, and re-enter his body. When the applause started, he rose to his feet and took his bows, but he did not take them for himself. He took the bows for the ability of his fingers on the piano. He could not take bows for the real music—the music that came from inside him, the music that came from his heart.

Rose Thompson

SOME DAYS



Some days are like
Crocus
Springing out of the earth;
Some days are like
Dry leaves

Floating down to their berth.
Some days are like
Snow flakes
That quickly melt away;
Some days are like
Roses
That bloom long after May.

Elva Martin

The Dwarf

Spring will tell with blooms;
She cannot keep it secret.
If the surgeon's blade was sure—
If the pruners' hearts endure—

June will tell with apples.

Elva Martin

THE VIOLET DOOR

From out a window wet with rain
I saw a violet door
And through its portals waited fame
Clearer than before.

I donned a coat and rubber boots
And entered that doorway;
There spread out on bare trees and roots
My hopes and dreams all lay.

I placed my hand upon the earth
And knew we were the same:
Tho winter is a welcome berth,
Spring is love regained.

Elva Martin

BLOW ON MARCH WINDS

Honors for yet a little while,
Songs beside the hearth,
Eyes and arms and lips to know;
Blow on March winds, blow on;

Blow the song of daffodils,
Whip the clothes awry,
Blow the song of newborn grass,
A rippling river, bye and bye;

Blow the song of weaving trees,
Toppling tiny nests,
Dance across the meadow,
Awaken the seeds at rest;

Blow the song of valleys
Echoing the great unknown,
Find my love a-roaming,
Tell him I've heard a song;

Find my love a-roaming,
Tell him to come home;
Blow on March winds, blow on
Till Gabriel sounds the song.

Elva Martin

I'm Ready For Spring

I'm ready for spring. I'm ready for warm weather. I'm ready for the harsh March wind to be replaced by warm weather threaded with gentle breezes that carry a hint of coming heat.

I'm ready for my arm to turn pink when I put it out the car window, and I'm ready for the sun to stand up to the clouds and cut them to bits. I'm ready for the girls to start sun-bathing on the sun deck, and I'm ready for bermuda shorts and bare feet, and I'm ready for snow and ice to fade into fitful memories.

I'm ready for the time when I can leave all the doors and windows in the house open before I have to turn on the air conditioner, and I'm ready to go outside without checking for rain and cold. I'm ready for the time when a cold shower will be a pleasant experience, and I'm ready to trade wool for cotton.

I'm ready for the trees to burst out all over in green and make shade in time for the sun to turn warm, and I'm ready for the bees and butterflies to get drunk from the nectar. I'm ready to by-pass the flowers with a lawn mower, and I'm ready for the flowers to decorate the yard and help soak up the mud from all the rain.

I'm ready to fall on my face in cold clover and let the entire world revolve on a bee that's mountain climbing on a clover blossom, and I'm ready to watch ants marching in quicksilver lines over everything. I'm ready to be able to lie on my back in itchy grass and watch the clouds have beauty contests, and I'm ready to swat flies out of their maneuvers in the air.

I'm ready to smell dogwood, apple blossoms, azaleas, thrift, roses and a million other fragrances, and I'm ready for mistletoe to hide itself until next year. I'm ready to walk under shade trees with my girl friend and have no worry about going in before the chill of evening. I'm waiting to see maple tree seeds parachute down and around, and I'm waiting for all manner of animals to wake up with me and shed their winter coats.

I'm ready for my kid brother and his friends to get themselves out in the yard or down the street so their yelling will be muted with distance, and I'm ready for them to catch the unfortunae fireflies and suffocate them in peanut butter jars.

I'm ready to go to a drive-in movie without needing a heater, 'cause I don't have one, and I'm ready for spring to issue ultimatums about such things with no apologies. I'm ready for clear nights when I can see the Milky Way through perfume of trees, and I'm ready for time to slow down and speed up at the same time the way it does only in spring.

People, I'm waiting for a rebirth of wonder, and I'm waiting for that rebirth of feeling as old as man.

People, I'm waiting for spring.

Mike Creswell

McNEILAS

Silk surrounds my lifeless body,
Faint faces passing o'er—
Like stars above my closed-in world
To glance my face once more.

One star halts its passing orbit,
To gaze a second longer.
'Tis Stella, the wife, the love I lost,
Was I who first did wrong her.

Her glassy eyes and tear stained face,
Tears of joy—not dread.
Now, her new love can take my place,
McNeilas now is dead!

Yes I, McNeilas, had seen this world,
With eyes open and wide.
But now, with soul-searching eyes I see,
How my first eyes lied.

McNeilas, the reckless, McNeilas, the prong
To wander to lie
McNeilas, the shiftless, McNeilas the lost—
Found his way home to die.

Again the faint lined orbit stopped,
To lease a falling star,
A greying figure gazed to see
Her son so close—so far.

Her tears ran from her sightless eyes;
My balmy face she touched.
She quickly joined the rest in such
A panic-stricken rush.

My home is raised and steps are taken,
Toward my freshly dug bed.
God, tell them they are all mistaken,
McNeilas is not dead!!

My breath so faint, my movements none,
My only life's, my eyes.
Now that the lowering away is done,
How still my body lies.

Darkness comes as they close my home,
An end to the life I led;
Clods strike the door with a morbid tone.
Dead—dead—But, I'm not dead!!

Ken Burger

Condemned

I dreamt of a wild black rose
Perched on a gray steel stem
By a stream that never flows
'Neath a sky dark and dim.
A dry mist cloaked the scene,
And rocks were dressed in mold.
I wondered what it all could mean;
My eyes were turning cold.
I felt my smile leave my face;
My heart then cringed in hate.
And though I fought my brain to wake,
I lost to a nightmare of fate.
I stood outside, my mind in fear,
And I knew I had to stay
Condemned to watch my end draw near
And see my life decay.

Ken Burger

"CONVENTION"

I live a death to please those gods
Who reign with social wisdom,
To pattern life in old facades,
On walls of dismal prisons.
I stand among the wrinkled faces
Tugging at chains about my mind,
Strongly bound by frilly laces,
As I'm forced to look behind.
Staring into a blackened past
Never to gaze ahead,
Until I turn around at last
To break my chains . . . when I am dead.

Ken Burger

THE POET

Marked by the scars of living,
The Poet carves his lines;
In tombstone verse he's readily giving
The thoughts he leaves behind.
To fall upon the minds of those
Who track his calloused hand.
To warn against their fickle foes,
Just in case they understand.
And, then, his carvings cease to be,
As he rests his rusty pen,
Saying, "See only what you want to see,
And leave the rest . . . my friend."

Ken Burger



HIS HANDS

His hands are old and wrinkled now. They lie still and undisturbed. Each crevis, now so very calm, once knew the roughness of uncarved stone and responded to the smoothness of the finished work. Each hand was adorned by the cool dampness of fresh clay. These aching, aging hands were anointed with finest oils and glorified in rich purple, crimson, and azure. The only gold they ever touched was that known by Van Gogh. These hands surveyed Turner's countryside and crept along the shores of painted seas. They felt the mist that Monet felt and yearned to prick the flesh of da Vinci. These hands witnessed riches never known to kings. They held and beheld beauty no poet could ever understand. They felt, and made, and became part of many memories. And now, nothing remains but those memories. The old artist is dead.

Margaret Trotter

When Love Has Died

The satin snow has mostly melted
now
and the apparently warm though cool
whiteness has gone except where the
shadows live
but it will be half past summer before
the distant deep blue mountains
lose their mantle of memory.

Mike Creswell

To Christie

Come walk with me alone, my love,
away from all the world,
and let its distant din create
a backdrop silhouette
for all our sweet and loving talk
and hand-in-hand slow walk.

Mike Creswell



The Question

How shall I spend tomorrow?

Will I wake with the sun and gaze out on the park?
Perhaps, to walk in early morning shadows and count
the beams of sunlight passing 'tween the leaves . . .
or will I wake at all?

I could place my favorite street under the strictest
exploration and give my world its fifteen minutes
of grave consideration with the morning news.

We could, you and I, haunt the sidewalks of this town
and sing anthems of the moments we have touched
and let pass on, still, on and on.

We could listen to the wind as it takes upon itself the
dust of men and songs, the dust of their days gone,
the dust of the songs we sang today.

Shall we chase tomorrow's butterfly and clasp its thin,
frail meaning in our hands and, with its life,
play God all afternoon?

Or shall we be satisfied to live tomorrow's dawn when
tomorrow comes and miss, completely, the songs
men cried today?

Jim Taylor
October 8, 1968

A SOLDIER

Nineteen and all alone he was in a trench with guns
and packs and dying platoons.

Trenches filled with wounded and dying,

Praying for peace, and for war—no more.

But the fighting is worse—much worse than before.

Then silence—your buddy is lying still.

He was just a boy, then a man—one of the best—

With love of country that caused his death.

Sallie Patrick

Essence Of A Dove's Wing

I have tasted essence of a Dove's wing,
I have beheld the beauty of the sunset,
I have gazed upon the happiness of
A new born babe,
But none compare with thee.

Your life is my life;
Your eyes are my sunshine in the morning;
Your hair is the nourishment of my day.
Your smile is the nightingale of my night.

By no utterance of complaint,
Through not a sigh of anguish,
Your joy is my happiness,
Your nearness eases my depression.
I long for the day that our hearts may be as one.
Larry Brazell

The Time Will Come

The time will come when men of action
Flood the fields and battleground;
When death reaps her happy victory,
And cries of pain rise all around;
Thus followed hate, their lord;
And found like others before them,
That only blood becomes a sword.
John Rankin



Atoms And Asphalt

Rain on asphalt,
I have heard the sound.
Through ages and eons,
The cycle continues round.
Will the asphalt be here
When next the rain comes down?

Man made the asphalt;
Now it is his master.
God made the rain
To come down ever faster.
When next comes the rain,
Shall so frail a being remain?
It is unlikely, it is un

Dan Cobb

WHO COULD LOVE ME?

Who could love me—
A person rejected by all?
Who could love me?
Could a young girl shy and lonely?
No—for my harsh words
Strike fear into the weak.
That friendly man next door?
No—for my fence is high,
And the gate is always locked.
The stranger that daily walks with me?
No—for my angry scowl
Reveals a heart that knows not love.
That hasty word that's oft regretted,
The sharp voice, and the unconcern
Drive all to farther ports.
Could anyone love me—
A stranger to love?

Adria Hughey

Sin Is Like Snow

A snowflake cannot a storm
make in itself,
Nor cause a drift for a
soul to fall,
Nor blanket the ground with
tree tops left,
To sentry over all.

The same it is with sin;
just one so small,
Cannot grasp and smother
the soul, if the soul
Is warm, and God has it all.

But many snowflakes make
a storm, and pile and drift
And cover all; and many sins
Make cold a heart, to blanket
and smother a soul.

Kenneth E. Lida

A DESERTED BEACH

As I wandered down the beach, I could see the gray mist of the rainy morning. It was a sight to behold—nothingness! The ocean was no longer a bright green color but a drab-looking brownish-green. The sky was no longer a beautiful shade of blue but a dismal shade of gray. The sand, now, was not an off-white color but a wet-looking brown. The clouds were not in sight. It was as if someone had come along and removed them to another planet or even to outer space. Since it was foggy, everything looked farther away than it actually was.

It was a cool feeling with the wind blowing against me. I could feel the moist sand beneath my feet, and I could sense the coldness from somewhere beyond me. Maybe the fact that it was a December morning also affected the chilliness. The warmth of the sun could not exist.

I wondered if I could be losing my mind. At first I could hear only the waves knocking against the pier, but voices very far off were soon coming in. I even imagined I heard a dog barking in the distance. Of course, it could not be. I knew that I was the only foolish one out on the beach at that time of the morning and at that time of the year. What imagination can do to one's mind! I wished that the voices and barking had existed. I was very lonely, and I needed someone with whom I could talk.

As I walked, I thought about my past visits to this same place. This was the first time that I had come to the beach in the winter. My thoughts ventured to the past summer when I had spent three weeks here. I had walked down this same strand, probably at this same hour; but, then, I had had an entirely different outlook toward life. In the summer I was not alone. Fishermen could be seen fishing, children could be seen playing ball or swimming, and couples could be seen strolling down the beach, arm-in-arm. In fact, Ted and I had been one of the couples.

My day dreaming is ended; suddenly, I have come back to reality. Tears fill my eyes. Everything has changed. Ted is dead—killed in a car accident two weeks ago. That's why I decided to come to this lonely beach. I wanted to get away from it all. The beach is one empty mass with no feeling whatsoever. It cannot feel as I do; yet it is deserted. The beach and I have something in common: the same lonely deserted feeling.

I start walking faster. My legs are about to give out. I must go on. There will be other summers. Things will not always be as they are this December. Loneliness will not last forever, for life must go on. One must not be lonely the short time that one remains on earth. I know one thing; never will I return to a dismal beach on a December morning. Never!

As I gaze upward to the misty-gray sky, a sudden melancholy feeling disrupts my thinking. I bow my head and say a short prayer.

Suddenly, things are brighter. Tomorrow will be another day. The beach will not always be deserted.

Kathy Brown

Chance Passed

An eagle soaring, gliding down
In morning air o'er virgin ground,
Gave a sudden excited hiss;
He'd spied a resting eagle miss.
She sat so still with folded wing,
But he flew close past with airy fling.
She chose to ignore the fleeting pass,
And sat once more with eyes of glass.
He swooped up high on morning breeze
And sailed back by as if to tease.
In talk that only eagles know,
He spoke to her in talk just so:
"O fairest maid on rocky cliff,
Wouldst thou not give thine heart a lift?
Why dost thou not come fly with me,
For there's the morning's world to see.
Catch the breezes going by,
And sail with me to Paradise.
It's not yet noon and not so hot;
In afternoon the breezes rot.
Why dost thou not come fly with me
And sail this morn the world to see?"
She looked up at the circling speck,
That soared and swooped and dove
unchecked,
And she thought her thoughts so very old,
Before her thought a million fold,
And though her heart was pulled in two,
She sat again and thought it through:
"I have not tried my wings as yet
For I have not my true love met.
I'll save them for his love and me,
He's to meet me here today at three.
I will not waste my wings in play,
So very early in the day."
Our flying hero gnashed his beak
And zipped around a mountain peak.
"Thou foolish maid, come fly with me;
The breezes will be gone by three.
Our day is short, there's little sun,
And yet you want to walk, not run.
Enjoy thy wings while they yet fly,
By three upon thy grave they'll lie."
And yet she sat with starchy pride,
To watch our hero sunward ride.
He glanced back once to check her fate;
Then on he soared at breathless rate.
Back upon the jagged cliff,
A maiden sat with back so stiff.
She waited until three all right,
But came no breezes and no knight.
And just like our hero once had said,
Her wings were spent on fun'ral bed.

Mike Creswell



CONTENTS

Introduction	1	Mike Creswell
Staff	1	
Haiku	2	Diane Boiter
"Thoughts"	2	Mike Pitts
"He Didn't Lose You"	2	Mike Watson
Ode To Spring	3	Kathie Hargrove
Joy	3	Linda Hawkins
The Music That Came From The Heart	4	Rose Thompson
Four Poems—		Elva C. Martin
Some Days	5	
The Dwarf	5	
The Violet Door	6	
Blow On March Winds	6	
I'm Ready For Spring	7	Mike Creswell
Four Poems—		Ken Burger
McNeilas	8	
Condemned	9	
"Convention"	9	
The Poet	9	
His Hands	10	Margaret Trotter
When Love Has Died	10	Mike Creswell
To Christie	10	Mike Creswell
The Question	11	Jim Taylor
A Soldier	11	Sallie Patrick
Essence of a Dove's Wing	12	Larry Brazell
The Time Will Come	12	John Rankin
Atoms and Asphalt	12	Dan Cobb
Who Could Love Me	13	Adria Hughey
Sin Is Like Snow	13	Kenneth E. Lida
A Deserted Beach	14	Kathy Brown
Chance Passed	15	Mike Creswell
Contents	16	

